

IT TOOK A CENTURY

S. A. RAMAN

# IT TOOK A CENTURY!

By

**S. A. RAHIM**

Assisted by

**S. VIJAYALAKSHMI, M.A., M.Litt.**

and

**V. R. RADHAKRISHNAN, B.A.**

*Publishers :*

**MURUGAN PATHIPPAGAM**  
**TEPPAKULAM — THIRUCHIRAPALLI**

**FIRST EDITION: AUGUST 1955**

*(All Rights Reserved)*

**PRICE: RUPEE ONE**

**Printed at Commercial Printing & Publishing House,  
46, Armenian Street, Madras-1.**

# IT TOOK A CENTURY!

## CHAPTER I

Bharath, the land of our birth, is a far-flung territory, spread out between the Himalayas in the North and Kanyakumari in the South. Was it not the poet Subrahmanya Bharati who hailed India as one of the greatest countries, for she excelled all the other countries of old in chivalry and cultural attainments? Before August 15, 1947, this great and ancient land of ours was under the rule of Britain. Today India owes her freedom to the Indian National Congress. But it is important to bear in mind that long before the Congress came into existence, the movement for the liberation of India from the British rule was launched.

You will read in Indian History that, in 1857, the Indian Sepoys revolted against the British. The patriotic fervour of these soldiers stirred the whole country. The desire for freedom from foreign yoke touched the hearts of the different sections of the people. They raised the slogan, "India is one country, the Hindus and the Muslims are the sons of the soil of this country; the British are foreigners; therefore they should quit." The echo of this slogan reached all corners of India. The Mughal



Emperor and a few of the dispossessed native princes participated in this struggle for freedom. The momentous events that followed 1857 belong to the first phase of the War of Indian Independence.

The mutiny that broke out in 1857 was the inevitable reaction to the policy the British pursued in the country. The real significance of this revolt has not been realised by many scholars. Some of the British historians dismiss it as nothing more than a 'Sepoy Mutiny'. Very few consider it as the first step in India's Fight for Freedom. Patriots hail this as the first War of Independence. Whatever might be the origin and nature of the revolt, the British cannot gainsay the fact that it was the outcome of a number of political, economic and military causes that emerged from the British rule in India.

The murdering of many British officials, the capturing of the Company Treasury and the arms and ammunition godowns, and the cutting of the telegraphic wires and transport communications were the main features of the plan the sepoys drew up. The sepoys and the deposed native rulers, together with the Mughal Emperor who had been reduced to the position of figure-head hoped that the able and simul-

taneous execution of such a plan at different places would undermine and finally terminate the Company rule that was being set up to govern the Indians.

After the successful implementation of the above scheme, the leaders of the rebellion had a further plan to organise and bring the people within the fold of the revolution to end the imperialist domination. The fact, that the wholehearted support of the entire people was essential for the success of the revolution was never lost sight of by the leaders of the movement. A statement bringing out the reasons for revolting against the British rule in India was released to the public by the freedom-fighters. This statement bore the signature of the then Mughal Emperor.

The application of the 'Doctrine of Lapse' and the annexation of a number of native states to the British territories, spread a wave of discontent and suspicion throughout India, and the cause of the dispossessed princes aroused the sympathy of all; and this further fomented the rebellion.

This revolutionary zeal that was the result of the prevailing tense situation, spread like wild fire all over the country. Delhi, Meerut,

Rohilkhand, Agra, Allahabad, North Western Frontier Province, Patna, Chota Nagpur, Southern Bengal, Ayodhya, Central Provinces and places in the western regions of Bihar came under the influence of this fast-spreading revolutionary wave. Great efforts were made to see that Hindu Muslim clashes were averted. Fortunately the unity between the two communities was preserved intact in spite of the British manoeuvre to wreck it.

### **The Leaders of the Revolution**

Although a detailed history of Free India alone can give a vivid and correct picture of this historic event, it is essential to know some basic truths about this revolution.

Two important persons who were responsible for organizing the Revolution of 1857, were Nana Sahib and Azeemulla Khan. The former belonged to the Peshwa family. The latter was his secretary. These two toured the whole of Northern India with a view to bringing all the scattered revolutionary forces together.

The prevailing feelings of bitter resentment, deep discontent and general dissatisfaction with the British rule in India helped Nana Sahib and his friend to a very large extent to mobilise public opinion in their

favour. Further, it enabled people to think in a new direction.

The British thought that Nana Sahib was a cultured gentleman and a good-natured host. For, had he not arranged frequently innumerable rich feasts in the year previous to the great rebellion, and invited British officials? He thus intelligently concealed his plans for the revolution. He converted into cash all the Company credit bonds at his disposal and thus prepared himself for the great event.

Little did the British rulers surmise that Nana Sahib would sow the seeds of revolution. Even on the eve of the outbreak of the rebellion, the British collector invited him to Kanpur to look after the Government Treasury.

Nana Sahib who enjoyed the confidence of the British, it seemed, turned overnight into a revolutionary. Azeemulla Khan was Nana Sahib's adviser. Azeemullah's life was an exiting story. He started his career as a scullion and ended his life as a diplomat. His association with the European officials under whose service he remained for long enabled Azeemullah to learn English and French language without much difficulty. Finally, he became the trusted confidant of Nana Sahib.

Nana Sahib sent Azeemulla Khan to London to conduct the case of the East India company in which the Peshwas were involved. Azeemulla's capacity to speak and argue had won for him in London the admiration of noble ladies. It was his intelligence that enabled Azeemulla to make good use of his stay in England to his own advantage. Azeemulla visited the scene of the Crimean War in which the British were taking part. He witnessed with his own eyes the bravery of the British soldiers. On his way back he visited Turkey and Afghanistan to gather support for the great Revolution of which Nana Sahib and he were the organisers.

Moulvi Ahmed Shah was another revolutionary. He was a diplomat who hailed from Faizabad, a town in United Provinces which is now known as Uttar-Pradesh. A powerful speaker and an able organiser, Ahmad Shah's speech stirred the revolutionary zeal of the people to such an extent that the British captured him, sentenced him to several years' imprisonment. When he was about to be hanged the prison gates were thrown open by the people and he came out as their leader.

Other important leaders of the Revolution were Tantia Tope, Kunvar Singh, and Rani

**Lakshmi Bai.** They were persons of determination. Their love of freedom, strength of purpose, and remarkable ability inspired many. All of them lacked experience in matters of military organisation. But the British soldiers were well trained and possessed enough experience:

Therefore, in all the direct fights that ensued the Indian revolutionaries were miserably defeated. But the Indians proved more successful than the British in Guerilla tactics. That was why in 1857 the revolution that commenced in the month of May prolonged till November of that year.

Every one knows the Rani of Jhansi's reputation as a fearless fighter and a brave rebel. The beautiful Rani was a noble, brave and patriotic leader. She had all the qualities of a hero. She moved about in man's attire and fought courageously on the horse back. While fighting the English soldiers, Rani of Jhansi died in the battle field. This is what a military officer said of her: "The ablest man on the side of the rebels was the woman found dead." She fell a martyr to the cause of freedom.

The oldest among the leaders of the Revolution was Kunvar Singh of Jagdeeshpur. He

was eighty years old then. But he was more energetic than his young colleagues. He was an expert in Guerilla Tactics. It was Kunvar Singh who fought bravely, retrieved his lost capital, pulled down the British flag and hoisted the banner of Revolution. Kunvar Singh was the only King who returned to his capital. He successfully drove away the usurpers from his capital and once again ascended the throne. But, as he was already aged and very weak, he could not stand the strain. He died in his Capital, three days after ascending the throne.

We do not know much about the leaders of the revolution. But we know that innumerable persons, inspired by a deep sense of patriotism, sacrificed their lives at the altar of freedom. The names of those who laid down their lives for the cause of freedom are not recorded in the pages of Indian history.

But their heroic deeds for the liberation of their motherland will remain ever green in the memory of all freedom-loving men.

### **Causes for the Failure**

The causes for the failure of the Indian revolutionaries are not far to seek. Before the well-trained and well-equipped army of the English the fighting tactics of the Indian sepoys



were nothing. Moreover, the English army had just then emerged from the Crimean War. A huge army of the British, well-trained in the use of weapons like rifles and gun-machines landed in India to curb the revolutionary movement. In the beginning of 1857 the English had conquered Persia. They had just then signed a pact with the Afghan countries. Yet another factor was that Britain still retained her supremacy over the seas. The revolutionaries had no assistance of any form from the outside world. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Indian Sepoys could be of no match to the well-trained, well-equipped British soldiers.

In India itself, the English had enough finances for the recruitment and maintenance of a huge army. The merchants of the East India Company were ruling the British Indian territories. This was one of the causes for the continued success of the English. Further, the English had also on their side the support of most of the ruling princes of India.

Just before 1857 the English, by the application of the 'Doctrine of Lapse' had seized such of those states, whose rulers died without a son or a natural heir to the throne. This resulted in deep discontent among many rulers. In order to remove the bitter feelings of resent-

ment and the thirst for revenge, the British renounced for the time being the 'Doctrine of Lapse.' The dispossessed native princes who had nothing but self-interest at heart, dreaded the might of the English army and therefore unhesitatingly stood by the English.

By the introduction of the permanent settlement of land in Bengal, the English created a body of faithful Zamindars who stood loyal by them.

It would be clear, from the foregoing account that the Indian revolutionary army was the product of the burning sense of patriotism and national sentiments. But it lacked the equipment of modern methods of warfare. It was unequal to the task of undertaking action simultaneously in all places. The rebellion was scheduled to break only on the twenty-second of June in that year, the occasion of the centenary celebration of the battle of Plassey, but it broke out earlier on tenth May 1857 at Meerut. Therefore the original programme of the revolutionaries was disturbed at the outset. There was no cohesion and unity of action. The revolution was hatched before it could be mature. So, the anticipated necessary mutual assistance and

co-operation between different parts of the country became a total impossibility.

Disinherited native princes, petty Chieftains in difficult circumstances and the local disgruntled Rajahs were the only source of strength and support for the revolutionaries. So the rebellion could not be a decisive factor in rooting out the rule of the British that had the backing of many of the ruling princes of India.

Further, the revolutionaries failed miserably in their efforts to bring the civil population from all parts of the country, especially from the South, within their fold. These were some of the reasons for the failure of the Indian Sepoys in the First War of Independence.

### **After the Rebellion**

The bitter memories of the days of the rebellion of 1857 were aggravated by the ruthless policy of repression adopted by the British in India later on. So, it left a feeling of horror in the minds of the people. The English too realised it. They were not for prolonging this state of affairs indefinitely. They thought it was essential that a peaceful atmosphere should prevail in the country. With this in

view they devised ways and means to establish order and peace. The administration of British Indian territories by the East India Company came to an end. The Indian territories passed under the direct rule of Queen Victoria. The ceremony of transfer of the responsibilities of administration of the Indian territories was performed at Allahabad on first November 1858. From that day the King or Queen of England became also the Emperor or Empress of India. The famous proclamation by Queen Victoria was made only on that historic day. This declaration removed to some extent the fear and suspicion that prevailed in the minds of the people.

But the economic exploitation which was the result of the policy pursued by the British rulers undermined the strength of the Indian people. Famine was rampant in the country. About half a crore of people fell victims to the deadly famine that lasted for seventeen years from 1857.

The repressive policy and widespread famine which were the results of the British rule set the people deep by thinking. By means of the Vernacular Press Act and the Arms Act, the Government restricted the rights of the people. As a result of the repressive policy

pursued by the British, conspiracies and small but violent riots became widespread. The English realised that it was not unlikely that the Indians would prepare for yet another revolt, and that too well-planned and properly organised.

Their efforts were directed in discovering whether such a revolution would have the backing and support of the intelligenzia of the country.

The first man who undertook the task of weaning the Indians away from the revolution-



ary mentality was an English man named Octavian Hume. He was an efficient British administrative officer. In 1882 Hume gave up his high office. The Government pensioned him. He travelled the country widely

to find out for himself the prevailing conditions. At this juncture a few educated Indians gathered together in a place. This gathering of a few educated men came to be called the *National Conference*. Ananda Mohan Bose from Bengal was the President of this first meeting. Although at this meeting no resolution of any great significance was adopted, it laid the found

ation for a meeting of Indians at an all-India level, year after year. This move was hailed by the British Government as a step to prevent the dissatisfied Indians from revolting against the British rule in India. Hume tried to turn the minds of the Indians from revolt to peaceful approach to their problems, through prayer and petition to the British to get their grievances redressed. It was Hume's dream that this annual meeting of the Indians would help them to fight for their rights and privileges in a peaceful manner.

Immediately after the first meeting, Hume rushed to Simla to acquaint the then Viceroy of India, Lord Dufferin. The unanimous decision arrived at by the two after a prolonged discussion in the cool and pleasant heights of Simla resulted in the birth of the *Congress*. Hume travelled from Simla in the North to Madras in the South. He met many intellectuals in Madras and discussed with them, the formation of the Congress. Consequently it was decided to send a circular all over the country bearing the signatures of seventeen persons. And on twenty-eighth day of December 1885, the first Indian National Congress met at Bombay.

The birth of the Indian National Congress was the most significant event in the history of

India's struggle for freedom. This organization in course of time developed into the most popular and heroic national organisation symbolising India's thirst for Independence. In short, the history of India's fight for Swaraj is the history of the Congress.

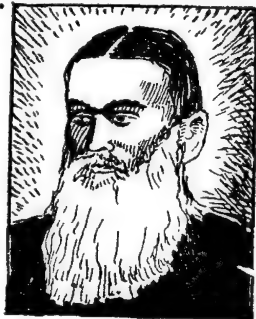
---



## CHAPTER II

### The First Congress at Bombay in 1885 :

The year 1885 may be said to open a new chapter in the history of our country. For, it was in that year the Indian National Congress was founded. The first meeting of the Congress was held in Bombay City. Seventy two representatives from all parts of the country attended this session.



Umesh Chandra Banerjee of Bengal presided over the First Congress Session. He was a popular lawyer of the Calcutta Bar. When he was offered a seat in the bench of the Calcutta High Court, he refused to accept it. In his presidential address, Banerjee stated that the Congress was founded with a view of eradicating caste, religious and provincial difference and to fostering the growth of national unity, and that the Congress would be the voice of the Indian people.

This was the first political meeting of the people on an all-India basis. This conference passed a resolution calling upon the Government to appoint a Royal Commission with

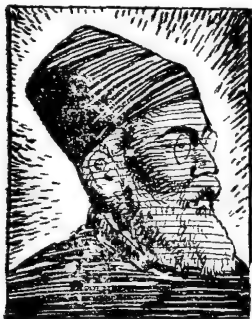
Indians in it, to enquire into the working of the British administrative machinery in India. This Congress demanded the disbanding of the India Council in England, and the establishment of elected representative assemblies in the provinces and centre, with powers to supervise and control the budgets of the Executive Councils. If the majority decisions of the assemblies were not acceptable to the Executive Council, a permanent Parliamentary Committee should be established to go through them.

Some of the other resolutions were that the Indian Civil Service examination should be conducted both in India and England simultaneously, the military expenses should be reduced and the duty on goods imported from other countries should be enhanced. These resolutions were more in the nature of requests to redress grievances than demands.

---

## The Second Congress at Calcutta in 1886:

The second conference was convened at Calcutta. Dadabhai Naoroji of Bombay



presided over this session. For some time this grand old man had been the professor of Gujarathi literature in the London University. He was a great genius and an eminent journalist. He had the unique honour

of being a member of the British Parliament.

His presidential address was a remarkable piece of literature. He said that the Congress should concern only with political problems and suggested that caste and communal problems should be taken care of by separate associations interested in these affairs. He warned that if immediate steps were not taken to put an end to the poverty of the masses, all the benefits conferred on the people by the British Government would vanish into thin air. He said that under the prevailing conditions, if Government thought of imposing new burden of taxes on the people, they would certainly lose their patience and the Government would be in danger. At the same time, he said to the people that if they demand

what they needed with patience and perseverance, it would certainly have the desired effect.

This Congress congratulated the Empress Victoria on the completion of her fifty years' rule. The conference expressed the opinion that only a representative government could solve the problem, of poverty. It also demanded that at least half of the members of the provincial and central assemblies should be elected by the people and the right of voting should be given to all those who were mature enough to think and exercise their franchise. The Acts which were to be enacted should satisfy all sections of the people. The different services should be enlarged by recruiting only Indians.

It would be noted that even as early as 1886, the Congress demanded the separation of the Judiciary from the Executive, so as to ensure the freedom of the individual.

---

### The Third Congress at Madras in 1887 :

Badrudeen Tayabjee of Bombay presided over the third Congress session, which was held at Madras. About 600 delegates and more than 3000 observers attended the conference. Sri Tayabjee was a member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly. He was the Chairman of the Bombay Muslim Educational Board.



He had also the honour of serving as a Judge of the Bombay High Court.

In his address he regretted the non-participation of the Muslims in the previous Congress session. He made a fervent appeal to the Hindus, Muslims, Parsees and Christians to join the Congress, the organisation which aimed at serving the cause of India, without any distinction of caste, creed or community. He said that the educated persons were the backbone of the British rule in this country, and that the Government should be ashamed to look upon them with suspicion.

Only in this session for the first time, a committee was formed to prepare rules and regulations of the organization.

This Congress demanded that Indians should be appointed as officers in the army and that military colleges should be started to train them. This conference also called upon the Government not to impose income-tax on persons who had an annual income of less than thousand rupees.

The relation between the Congress and the Government had not become strained. The Governor of Madras, Lord Connemara, entertained the Congress delegates at a luncheon party.

### **The Fourth Congress at Allahabad in 1888 :**

We have already read how Mr. Hume an English officer, was interested in founding the Indian National Congress. It is equally important to bear in mind that the merchant section of England was also interested in strengthening the Congress organization in India. One such English merchant was George Yule. Mr. Yule served for some time in the branch of the Indian National Congress in England. He was elected



president of the Fourth annual session of the Congress held at Allahabad.

“ We do not want to break the chains, but we want only our ties to be loosened a little. We know fully well that our eyes do not possess the power to see the bright light. But, if the doctor in whom we have immense faith, forces us to stay in the dark room for a longer time, we will be compelled to suspect him. Then it will be only natural that we not only criticise the doctor, but also feel disgusted with his service,” said Yule in his presidential address.

The then Viceroy Lord Dufferin looked at the Congress with suspicion and he even expressed the view that the Congress was fast becoming an organization preaching disloyalty against the Crown and that there was a tinge of extremism in the resolutions adopted and the speeches made at the Congress session. The Government demanded from a person who attended the Madras Session, a surety of Rupees Ten Thousand. In the Punjab, in one district alone, sureties for good behaviour were demanded from not less than five hundred persons. Because of these actions on the part of the Government, two eminent persons Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan and Raja Siva Prasad opposed the convening of the Congress that year.



The resolutions passed in the previous session were reiterated in this Congress. The Congress called upon the Government to take immediate steps to arrest the growing evil of drink among the people. The conference condemned the increase in Salt tax and also the police excesses. Munshi Sajjad Hussain who moved the resolution on the police excesses, said that the hardships inflicted on the common men by the police appeared to be greater than the hardships experienced by the robbers. He said that police enquiries brought more sorrow to the people than what they had felt at the actual loss of their property.

Mr. Hume became the Secretary of the Congress this year.

#### **The Fifth session at Bombay in 1889 :**

Bombay had the honour of convening the Congress for the second time within such a short period after it was founded. The attendance of delegates and observers was increasing from year to year. One thousand eight hundred and eighty nine delegates and six thousand observers participated in this Congress. Sir William Wedderburn presided over this year's Congress Session.



Mr. Wedderburn had been a District Judge for more than twenty years. He left the services and joined Mr. Hume and worked with him in building up the Congress. He had written a number of books. In later days, when differences arose between the Congress and the Muslim League, he tried his best to bring the two organizations together.

In his presidential address Mr. Wedderburn said that the attitude of the beauracrâcy was against the interests of the tax-payers. They could not expect the administrative machinery to establish either peace or practice economy. He further said, "If only the peasants had been treated justly, famine conditions would not have prevailed; They would have increased the agricultural production and wiped out the famine. If only the burden of debt on the bent back of the peasants was removed, they would be able to convert this vast poverty-stricken country into a land flowing with milk and honey."

Sir Charles Bradlangh, a member of the British Parliament, who attended this Congress Session and who had no racial prejudices, promised that he would bring a Bill in the Parliament with a view to making progressive reforms in the British Indian administration.

You must have read about the great leaders Gopalakrishna Gokhale and Balagangadhar Tilak. They attended the Congress for the first time and participated in the Subjects-Committee meeting.

### Sixth Congress at Calcutta in 1890:

For a second time, the City of Calcutta was the venue of the Congress session. Seven hundred



red delegates and eight thousand spectators attended this conference, which was presided over by Sir Ferozshah Mehta, a great and reputed lawyer of Bombay.

Mr. Mehta had been a member of both the central and provincial legislatures. He was the founder of the Central Bank of Bombay. He was also responsible for starting a nationalist daily 'Bombay Chronicle', which remains a popular English paper even to this day.

In his address Mr. Mehta said, "some people may laugh at our aims and aspirations. Some may accuse us as dangerous and disloyal citizens. They may not care to understand what

we fight for. ■ But one thing is very clear. Our words are the outspoken expression of the throbbings of our heart. We want to march forward and build up our country on strong foundations.”

The Government of the day, which was anxiously watching the growth and popularity of the Congress, got panic-stricken and prohibited Government servants from attending the Congress session.

This conference prepared a memorandum and deputed two outstanding orators from Bengal, Sri Umesh Chandra Banerjee and Surendranath Banerjee, to visit England and explain to the people the hopes and aspirations of the Indian Nation.

This Congress also adopted a resolution calling upon the Government to introduce a permanent system of land-revenue.

---

### **Seventh Congress at Nagpur in 1891 :**

Presided over by the famous Andhra lawyer Sri Ananthacharlu, the Seventh Congress met at Nagpur. He said that the Congress should not be afraid of criticising the Government and agitating for the redress of grievances. He was optimistic that the Indians of succeeding generations would be benefitted by the pioneering work done



by the Congress. He also suggested that the Congress leaders, instead of meeting once a year and passing resolutions, should freely mix and move among the people and spread the gospel of nationalism. It was during this session that Bala Ganghadhara Tilak moved a resolution calling upon the Government to curtail the military expenses and this resolution was ably supported by Sri Gopalakrishna Gokhale.

### **Eighth Congress at Allahabad in 1892 :**

Sri Umesh Chandra Banerjee who was deputed to visit England on behalf of the Congress, presided over this year's session. In his presidential address he pointed out that their agitation could not cease until they got justice.

A resolution was adopted expressing thanks to Lord Cross, who brought a Bill in British Parliament to introduce legislative reforms in India. The Congress regretted the rules framed under this law, which were against its very spirit.

### **Ninth Congress at Lahore in 1893 :**

For the second time Dadabhai Naoroji, the grand old man of India, presided over the Congress session. He said, "Poverty is a dreadful enemy of both the ruler and the ruled. Unless both of them tried to eradicate the evil of poverty by mutual co-operation, the danger cannot be averted. The immediate task before the nation is to forget the distinctions of caste, creed and religion and rise as one man to build up the foundations of our great country. I am sure that day is nearing when the people of this land will once again enjoy their rights, and sit as equals in the councils of the world. No one can prevent this." To-day we see how his prophecy has come true.

---

## Tenth Congress at Madras in 1894:

Sir Alfred Webb presided over this Congress. He was one of those revolutionaries who had taken part in the Irish Revolt for freedom. He came to India at the persistent requests of Dadabhai Naoroji and Umesh Chandra Banerjee.



His presidential speech was full of inspiration. He said that the people of Ireland; by their own experience, knew fully well the difficulties of a subject nation and that he would not hesitate to fight imperialism and suppression in any part of the globe.

Mr. Webb blamed the western civilisation introducing drink and debauchery in the country. Nothing was more degrading than the enactment of the 'Cantonment Areas Act,' which allowed unfettered scope for the European soldiers to practise prostitution. Humanity can never forget or forgive the Britishers for encouraging the cultivation of opium plants in India and finding market for this drug in China.

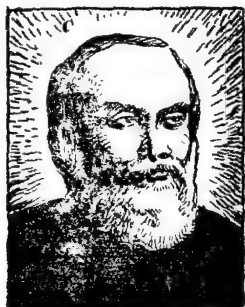
This Congress condemned the imposition of regressive excise duty on Indian made mill-cloth



at the instigation of the Lancashire cotton mill magnates. The Congress also criticised in strong words the repressive laws which curtailed the freedom of the press.

### **Eleventh Congress at Poona in 1895 :**

Poona was the venue of this session. The great orator Surendranath Banerjee of Bengal



presided over it. He was one of those who strongly opposed the partition of Bengal. Later, he accepted the 'Montague-Chelmsford Reforms' and became a minister of the Bengal Government.

He warned the British that if political reforms were delayed, it would help to sow the seeds of revolt. He pleaded for appointment of more Indians in administrative services.

---

### **Twelfth Congress at Calcutta in 1896 :**

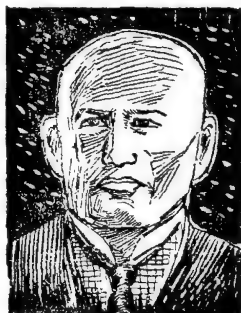
Mohamed Rahmathulla Sahani presided over this year's Congress session. He had been the President of the Bombay Municipality and a member of the provincial as well as central legislatures. He appealed to the Muslims to join the Congress in greater numbers.



This Congress sent congratulatory message to Queen Victoria on her sixtieth birthday. This Congress also urged upon the Government to appoint Indians in the Executive Councils of Madras and Bombay Governments.

### **Thirteenth Congress at Amraoti in 1897 :**

Sir Sankaran Nair, a prominent and popular advocate of Kerala, presided over this Congress, which met at Amraoti, a town in Central Provinces. He was an Advocate-General of the Madras Government for some time and later, he was elected to the bench of the Madras High Court. He also served as a



member of the Viceroy's Executive Council for some time. As a protest against the atrocities committed by the Government in the Punjab in 1919, he resigned this coveted post. But later on, he wrote a book criticising Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement.

In his presidential address Mr Nair said that the Government was responsible for the poverty of the people. "To finance from the Indian Treasury the wars which had no relevance to India is a gross injustice. We should not fall a prey to the sweet smiles of the British authorities or be frightened by their frowning look," said he.

We find from now on the Government taking series of repressive measures to suppress the growing spirit of nationalism amongst the Indians. Lokamanya Tilak was put in prison on a charge of preaching sedition. Many patriots were sent out of the country. An armed police force was established at Poona. The laws of repression were made more and more vigorous. Protest meetings were held in cities like Bombay, Madras and Calcutta against such repressive measures. The period of petition-making had come to an end and the era of agitation began.

### **Fourteenth Congress at Madras in 1893 :**

Sri Anandh Mohan Bose who was a Professor of Mathematics in the Calcutta Engineering College, presided over this Congress. He was also the President of the Theosophical Society and a Member of the Bengal Provincial Assembly.



He said that there could be no real progress in any movement unless people were prepared to forget their own self and sacrifice everything.

### **Fifteenth Congress at Lucknow in 1899 :**

Ramesh Chandra Dutt presided over this Congress which was conducted in Lucknow.

Sri Dutt was a big officer in the Government. He had written books in Bengali literature and he had also translated the 'Rigveda'. His book on the 'Civilisation of Ancient India' was a very popular one. He had also been a Professor of the London University and the Dewan of the Baroda State.



He said that the destruction of cottage industries and the increased burden on the people on account of the land revenue, were primarily responsible for the famine in the country. He also expressed surprise at the Britishers saying that India, which had a historical tradition of three thousand years of village administration, as being unfit for freedom.

This Congress condemned the series of repressive measures adopted by the then Viceroy, Lord Curzon.

### **Sixteenth Congress at Lahore in 1900 :**

Sri N.C. Chandavarkar of Bombay presided over this Congress which met at Lahore in the Punjab.

He was an eminent Lawyer of the Bombay High Court. He later occupied the position of a Judge of the same High Court. He also served as the Administrator-General of the Indore State. He had been on many occasions member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly and also its President. He edited a journal by name Hind Pra-



kash. Later he was a Liberal and he accepted the ' Montague Chelmsford ' Reforms.

" The taxation policies of the Government of India on local industries affected the growth and expansion of industrialisation and helped the prosperity of the British industries. It was the duty of the Congress to agitate against this atrocious policy."—said Chandavarkar in his presidential speech.

This Congress took up on consideration the problem of the Indians in South Africa.

### **Seventeenth Congress at Calcutta in 1901 :**

Mr. Dinshah Wacha, a cotton mill owner of Bombay, presided over this Congress held at Calcutta. He had been a member both in the Provincial Assembly at Bombay and Central Assembly at Delhi. He was also the Governor of the Imperial Bank of India. Later he left the Congress and joined the Liberal Federation.



In his presidential address he condemned the extravagant expenses incurred by the Government in a poor country like India and said that this was sufficient evidence to expose

and prove the irresponsible nature of the Government

It was in this Congress that *M. K. Gandhi* participated for the first time and moved a resolution on the conditions of Indians in South Africa.

### **Eighteenth Congress at Allahabad in 1902 :**

This year's Congress was held at Allahabād under the presidentship of Surendranath Banerjee of Bengal.

“ Diffidence could not be the weapon of the fighters for freedom. People with strength would not think of surrender or defeat. With courage and determination we should make the people of our country march forward towards our cherished ideal.” This was his inspiring appeal to the people of his country.

This congress again urged upon the Government to reduce its military expenses.

## Nineteenth Congress at Madras in 1903 :

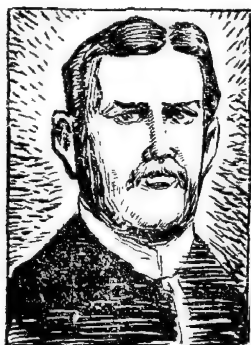
Lal Mohan Ghose, a popular and prominent lawyer of the Calcutta Bar, presided over this Congress. He contested Parliamentary Elections twice in England, but got defeated. He had the reputation of a fine orator and an eminent writer.



In his presidential address he pointed out that if the Government had spent half of what they had spent on Delhi Durbar celebrations, lakhs of lives might have been saved. He also said that the Government were bribing the rich and the educated classes by tempting them with titles and high offices. Therefore, the aim of the Congress should be to unite and consolidate the toiling millions, who alone could fight with determination. Resolutions condemning the extravagant military expenditure incurred by the Government were passed and Congress calling upon Britain to pay its part of expenses.



## Twentieth Congress at Bombay in 1904 :



Sir Henry Cotton, an Englishman, presided over this Congress. He had been the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal and High Commissioner of Assam. He lost the opportunity of becoming a Governor because of his differences with Lord Curzon, the then

Viceroy.

Mr. Cotton was the first to propose a Federal form of administration for India. Later, he also served as a member of the British Parliament.

In his presidential address he called upon the Congress not to slacken their efforts. He warned that petty jealousies and differences would destroy the unity of the country. He believed that progress could not be delayed far long even by the nation's bitterest enemies.

A resolution calling upon the Government to abandon the idea of partitioning Bengal was adopted.

## Twenty First Congress at Benares in 1905 :

On the banks of the Ganges in the City of Benares, met the Twenty first Congress under the presidentship of Sri. Gopalakrishna Gokhale, one of the most illustrious sons of India.



Mr. Gokhale belonged to Maharashtra, the land which gave birth to Sivaji. He served as a Professor in the Ferguson College Poona. He had been a member of Central Assembly on many occasions. He took keen interest in the condition of Indians in South Africa. He visited South Africa when Gandhiji was working there among the Indians and fighting for their rights.

He said that the Government was taking greater and keener interest in the welfare of the military, beauracracy and the capitalists than in the common man. "The domination of one country on another killed the moral spirit and the material prosperity of the subject country. Any country under foreign domination would lose its initiative and would fall an easy victim to poverty and misery," said Gokhale.

Bala Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai pressed that the Congress should boycott the visit of the Prince of Wales and thus show their resentment to the Government. But, this move was vehemently opposed by Gokhale and Surendranath Banerjee. After a heated discussion, it was decided to welcome the Prince of Wales.

The Congress condemned the partition of Bengal and urged upon the Government "to annul the same".

This Congress also appealed to the people to boycott British goods. It was at this session that decision was taken to send Gokhale to England with a view to explain to the people of that country the principles and policies of the Congress.

This year also saw the birth of the Muslim League. The League later grew into a powerful communal organization, which agitated for the division of the country.

### **Twenty Second Congress at Calcutta in 1906 :**

In the last Congress, you would have observed that groups were emerging out, one under the leadership of Tilak and the other

under Gokhale. Tilak was radical in his views. Gokhale and his followers were moderates. Tilak was gaining ground inside the Congress and the moderates were also preparing themselves to face the radicals. It was under such circumstances that Dadhabai Naoroji, who was then in England was invited to preside over the Congress session, which was held at Calcutta.

In his presidential address Naoroji said that in any movement there would be ups and downs, but they had to continue their struggle, unmindful of their failures. "The demand of the Congress for self-government is just. Since India is a subject country, foreigners exploit her in all fields. The expenses incurred by the Government on Military and big officials only help Britain to expand her imperialist activities. But the the burden of the expenses has really to be borne by the poverty-stricken people of India. The Government not only want the people to shoulder the burden of heavy taxation, but they also want them to obey all their orders without uttering a word of protest." This was the substance of his presidential address.

It will not be out of place to remark that Dadabhai Naoroji has secured for himself a

permanent place in history. He was the first Indian to contest and gain a seat in the British Parliament. The people of India affectionately called him the 'Grand Old Man' of India and this title speaks volumes for the warm, grateful and generous hearts of his country-men for him.

His life is one that will never fade from memory and will be cherished for untold generations as a rich heritage and inspiration. Dadabhai Naoroji was making very careful study at London Museum to collect data to prove that the British Imperialist were exploiting the Indians, when at the same time Karl Marx was walking there on his celebrated book about the exploitation of the society by the capitalists.

---

## CHAPTER III

### Twenty third Congress at Surat in 1907 :

With this year a new chapter begins in the history of the Congress. This Congress, which was scheduled to be held at Nagpur, was shifted to Surat because of the growing differences among the radicals and the moderates.



Rumours spread that the resolution regarding self-government, 'boycott of foreign goods and encouragement of swedeshi articles would not be taken up for discussion in the subjects committee meeting. This news created a stir among the delegates.

After the welcome-address by the chairman of the reception committee, the name of Rash Behari Gosh was proposed. This was strongly opposed by a section of the delegates. Surendranath Banerjee got up to second the resolution. He was not allowed to make a speech. There was confusion and the conference was adjourned for the next day.

The next day when the conference reassembled, Surendra Nath Banerjee made a speech.

Then, Rash Behari Gosh occupied the chair. Tilak got up and went to the platform to speak. The delegates began to talk among themselves forming into separate groups.

A crowd of people with sticks in their hands hurried towards the platform. Nobody could control the confusion. Police entered the scene and the session ended abruptly.

Throughout the country the Congress split into two groups the radicals and the moderates and Tilak emerged as the leader of the radical group.

### **Twentythird Congress at Madras in 1908 :**

Since the Congress at Surat ended in confusion, another Congress was summoned at Madras and this was presided over by the same Rash Bihari Gosh. He was an advocate of the Calcutta Bar and a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. He said that in a struggle, defeats were inevitable and occasions might arise when one would be forced to retreat and they should not be ashamed of set-backs. He also criticised Lord Curzon for sacrificing the interests of the Indians for the well-being of the British officials.

Resolutions welcoming the contemplated Minto-Morley Reforms were passed, as well as resolutions on Swadeshi movement and national education.

### **Twentyfourth Congress at Lahore in 1909 :**

Under the chairmanship of Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, the twentyfourth session met in



the city of Lahore in the Punjab. Pt. Malaviya hailed from the United Provinces, now known as Uttar Pradesh. He was a member of the Central Assembly and as a protest against the Rowlett Act, he resigned his membership of the

Assembly. When the Second Round Table Conference was held in England with Mahatma Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu as India's representatives, Malaviya also was invited by the British to participate in the same. He was also for some time the president of the Hindu Maha Sabha. Pt. Malaviya was responsible for organising the Banares Hindu University. Mahatma Gandhi called him a 'prince among beggars,' because, by collecting donations alone, he founded this famous University.



In his presidential address he stressed the importance of Compulsory Elementary Education and said that illiteracy was responsible for many of the difficulties experienced by the people.

The Minto-Morley reforms were introduced that year. In the name of giving special privileges to the minorities, these reforms sowed the seed of Hindu-Muslim dissensions. Thus, the Britishers successfully adopted the policy of *Divide and Rule*. The Muslims of India were terribly against the Britishers because of the repressive policy pursued by them after the first War of Independence. At first the British treated the Hindus with special favour and tried to win them over and later, they changed their tactics and wooed the Muslims and tried to wean them away from the National Movement. Throughout the history of British rule in India, we find the Britishers playing one community against another in order to strengthen their hold on the country.

The Lahore Congress strongly condemned this policy of the Britishers.

### **Twentyfifth Congress at Allahabad in 1910:**

The efforts of the British to divide one community against another, succeeded. Minto-

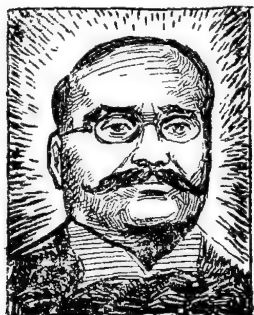
Morley reforms created communal tension. In the elections held under these reforms, the two communities stood sharply divided.

Mr. William Wedderburn was invited from England to preside over the Congress session. He pleaded for the unity of the two communities.

In this year communal representation and separate electorates were introduced even in the local boards. Mohammad Ali Jinnah spoke in this session condemning the introduction of separate electorates.

### **Twentysixth Congress at Calcutta in 1911:**

Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar presided over this Congress. He was a lawyer of great eminence and a good writer. He served as a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly.



In the course of his presidential address, he condemned communalism, and asserted that he who kindled communalism was the greatest enemy of the people and was the arch villain who destroyed the national unity. He pleaded for strong and unwavering

leadership with courage of conviction and self-sacrifice.

Delhi became the Capital of India from this year onwards. The partition of Bengal was also annulled.

Wedderburn and Aga Khan tried to unite the leaders of the two major communities.

### **Twentyseventh Congress at Bankipur in 1912:**



Mudulkhar of Berar presided over this Congress. He was a great social worker. He expressed the view that without social progress there could be no advancement in the political field.

Mr. Hume, the *father* of the Congress died this year.

This Congress condemned the attempts to throw bombs at the Viceroy and also the dismissal of Indians from high positions in the military.

## **Twentyeighth Congress at Karachi in 1913 :**

Nawab Sayeed Mohamed of Madras presided over this Congress which took place at Karachi, the present capital of Pakistan.



for India.

He appealed to both the Hindus and the Muslims to forget their petty differences and work together for the cause of the Nation. The Congress congratulated the Muslim League on its demand for self-Government

## **Twentyninth Congress at Madras in 1914 :**

The First World War broke out this year. The Congress met this year at Madras under the presidentship of Bhupendranath Basu. The Governor of Madras attended this session. When he came to the session, the entire gathering rose up to welcome him.



This Congress by a resolution pledged all support to Britain in its war efforts and also appealed

to the Government to establish military schools for giving training to the people in the methods of warfare. This Congress was anxious to prove its loyalty to the Crown.

### **Thirtieth Congress at Bombay in 1915:**

Sri Satheyandra Prasanna Sinha presided over this Congress. He was a prominent advocate.



He was a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and he also had served as Governor of a province. He was made a 'Lord' by the Crown and he became the Deputy Secretary for India. He moved the 'Government of

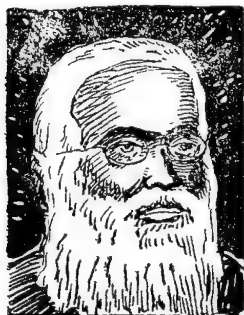
India Bill' in the House of Lords.

In his presidential address Sri Sinha observed in the words of Abraham Lincoln that Indians should have a government of the people for the people, by the people. He also pointed out that in the modern world, if the Indians were not conscious of their freedom and were not prepared to defend their country, it would be difficult for them to uphold the banner of freedom even if the Britishers granted self-government.

The ban on the radicals to join the Congress was removed and Tilak and his followers were allowed to re-enter the Congress-fold.

### **Thirtyfirst Congress at Lucknow in 1916 :**

Ambikasaran Mazumdar, a prominent lawyer of Bengal, presided over this Congress.



Delivering his presidential speech, Mazumdar said: "Patriotism is not taught by any teacher. It is the spontaneous outburst of the innermost feelings of one's heart. Just as a drop of water loses its individuality when it falls in an ocean,

so too, the individuals when they gather together for a greater cause, lose their individuality. In achieving this, they should never lose their spirit "

The Lucknow Congress supported the joint proposal of the Congress and the Muslim League and adopted a resolution calling upon the Government to abolish the India Office in London and appoint in its place a Central Executive Council in Delhi responsible to the Central Assembly.

After the Surat Congress, Tilak returned to the Congress and participated in its activities. Tilak in Poona and Mrs. Besant in Madras founded the Home Rule League.

### Thirtysecond Congress at Calcutta in 1917 :

Mrs. Annie Besant presided over this Congress which was held at Calcutta. She was



a dynamic personality responsible for conducting and leading many progressive movements. In Britain, she had been in the forefront of the trade union movement, movement for women's suffrage and the activities of the Fabian Society.

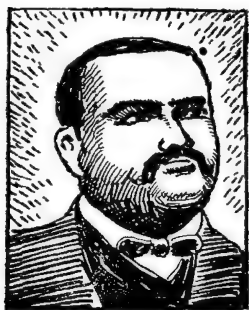
Later, she founded the Theosophical Society in India. She started agitation for Home Rule in India. She supported Montague-Chelmsford reforms. But she opposed the non-violent non-co-operation movement of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1927, she supported the demand for Purna Swaraj".

In her presidential address she said, "India is not so weak as to beg with knees bent, but she was strong enough to stand erect and press for her demands."

For the first time in the history of the Congress, a flag which was designed by Mrs. Annie Besant for Home Rule League, was hoisted. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer was the Secretary of the Congress this year. Sir S. Subramania Iyer who was a Judge of the Madras High Court, renounced his Knighthood and joined the agitation for Home Rule.

### **Thirty third Congress at Bombay in 1918 :**

A special session of the Congress was held at Bombay under the presidentship of Hassan



Imam of Calcutta. He was a member of the Calcutta Bench and trustee of the Aligarh University. He supported Mahatma Gandiji's Satyagraha movement. He said that in order to plunder and exploit India, the Britishers had framed laws and

rules and had given legal sanctions for their robbery. The Congress reiterated its condemnation of the Montague-Chelmsford reforms and expressed its opinion that Congress-League Demands alone were suitable to India.

### **Thirtyfourth Congress at Delhi in 1918 :**

Again this year the Congress met at Delhi. Madhan Mohan Malaviya presided over this



year's session. The Congress urged<sup>d</sup> upon the Government to release Ali brothers and others, detained under the Regulations Act.

### **The Rowlatt Act :**

After the First World War, the British on their part also had promised to India Home Rule. But with the allied victory came disillusionment. Instead of Home Rule, came the Rowlatt Act.

Fearing that secret movements to overthrow the British rule in India might be organised by the Congress, the Government appointed an Enquiry Commission under the chairmanship of an English man, Rowlatt. Out of this enquiry came the obnoxious Rowlatt Act. The members of the central and provincial legislatures strongly opposed this Act. The entire nation condemned this. Gandhiji who was till then a loyal supporter of the British, was deeply hurt, and started the non-cooperation movement.

### **The Massacre of Jallian wahah Bagh :**

As decided by Gandhiji, "Satyagraha Day" was observed throughout the Country, in the month of April in 1919. Starting from sixth April, there were demonstrations, meetings, processions and hartals, in the country. There

were disturbances in several parts of the Punjab, General Dyer was stationed at Amritsar to quell any demonstrations.

A peaceful public meeting was held at Jallian walah Bagh in Amritsar. He massed his troops and without a warning ordered fire on the people. The slaughter and panic that followed are indescribable. The dead and the wounded were left unattended the whole night. Beating, whipping and shooting, crawling orders and Martial Law became the order of the day. This meeting in which General Dyer ordered fire, has passed into history. This is the price of liberty.

### **Thirtyfifth Congress at Amritsar in 1919 :**

This year's Congress met at Amritsar where the British Government had killed innocent people. Pandit Motilal Nehru, the father of our Prime Minister presided over this Congress. Motilal Nehru was a great and prominent lawyer of the Allahabad High Court. He was a moderate and a liberal by tradition and temperament.



Under the direct influence of Mahatma Gandhi, he was changed completely and he took a leading part in the non-co-operation movements like the boycott of the Simon Commission and the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales and in the Salt Satyagraha.

It was he who, with C. R. Das, started the Swaraj party with a view to entering into legislatures 'to wreck the constitution'. He donated his palatial bungalow 'Swaraj Bhavan' to the Congress and it was here that the All India Congress Committee's office was run for a number of years till it was shifted to New Delhi.

In his presidential address Motilal said that the reforms attempted in a country which was not free, were just like silk robes, diamonds and jewels adorning a dead body. He appealed to the people to follow truth with courage and determination to achieve their cause.

This Congress urged upon the Government to dismiss *Michael Odweyer* who was responsi-

ble for the massacre of Jalianwala Bagh. C. R. Das brought a resolution for boycotting the Montague-Chelmsford reforms.

Mahatma Gandhi moved an amendment that Congress should co-operate in working out the reforms. After long and heated discussions, a compromise was arrived at, by which it was decided to work out the reforms in such a way as to establish full representative rule in the country.

---

## CHAPTER IV

### Thirtysixth Congress at Calcutta in 1920 :

With this year another new chapter begins in the history of the Congress. A special



Congress session was convened at Calcutta, over which Lala Lajapat Rai, popularly known as the 'Lion of the Punjab', presided. During the days of the boycott of the Simon Commission, he led a huge procession demonstrating

against the Commission's visit, and he was severely wounded by the lathi charge. "Every beating on my body is a nail hit on the coffin of the British Imperialism," he declared.

His presidential address was full of inspiration. He said that he was determined to carry on the fight unmindful of the weakhearted colleagues and the oppressive policy of the Government. A country, he said, was shaped by the people of that land. "A weak people cannot create a strong nation" he added. He exhorted the people to face trials and tribulations and march forward.

This Congress also adopted a resolution for launching a mass struggle. This is the famous "non-co-operation" resolution.

To show in public that people were losing faith in the Government, it was resolved that those who had been awarded titles should renounce them. To boycott government offices, courts, colleges, schools, and to boycott foreign goods, especially cloth was on the programme of activities of the Non-co-operation movement.

After this Congress Mahatma Gandhi emerged as the unique leader of the nationalist movement in this country. The propaganda for Khadi was started from this year as well as the movement for spreading Hindi.

### **Khadi Movement.**

In memory of Tilak the Congress collected a fund and it was utilised for spreading the Khadi movement. At first the Congress was directly doing this work. Since political work interfered with this constructive activity, a separate organisation called 'All India Spinners' Association' was founded. Mahatma Gandhi directed the work of this body. Branches were started throughout the country and Khadi became the symbol of nationalism.

### Thirtyseventh Congress at Nagpur in 1920 :

C. Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem presided over this Congress, which was held at Nagpur.



He was a great Lawyer, popularly known as the 'grand old man' of South India. He observed that to say that the future of India depended on British Parliament was a disgrace to the Indians. "The Indians were treated worse than criminals and they had to get out of this damned condition", he declared.

"Behave like a good friend or get out of the country!" thus he warned the British.

The Congress reiterated the non-co-operation resolution adopted at Calcutta conference, and explained that non-violence was its basis. In order to make the working of the Congress smoother and easier, the country was divided into linguistic areas. For the first time, a working committee consisting of fifteen persons was also appointed.

Sri A. Rangaswamy Iyengar of Madras became one of the secretaries of the Congress.

### Thirtyeighth Congress at Ahmedabad in 1921 :

Chittaranjan Das of Bengal was the *President* of this Congress session. On the eve of the Congress Session he was arrested and therefore in his absence Mr. Hakim Ajamal-khan of Delhi presided. He was a firm believer in the non-co-operation movement. He worked for Hindu-Muslim unity.



“After seeing persons voluntarily sacrificing everything and entering prisons, how could any one say that the Non-co-operation movement had not succeeded?” asked Ajmal Khan. He boldly asserted that the Non-co-operation struggle based on Non-violence was a new technique which could be adopted and followed throughout the Asian countries. He hinted that a day was bound to come when this unique moral method would be accepted as the most powerful weapon which the suppressed humanity could handle successfully against its oppressors”.



### Thirty-Ninth Congress at Gaya in 1922 :

C. R. Das, released from the prison, presided over this Session. He was earning millions of rupees as a lawyer and he spent everything for the nation. He founded the Swaraj Party inside the Congress, to push through the Legislative programme.



In his Presidential Address he boldly asserted that any law or order passed without the consent of the people should be disobeyed and that alone was an expression of freedom. Law and order were to be passed only for the benefit of the people and not against their interests. People who had the courage of conviction should not hesitate to fight against unjust laws.

This Congress defeated the resolution of C. R. Das on contesting elections for Assemblies. The opposition to the move was led by Rajaji. Those who opposed entry into the legislatures were known as "No-changers"

### **Nagpur Flag Satyagraha—1923 :**

The Government prohibited the carrying of the national flag in the streets of Nagpur. As a protest against this order the Satyagraha was organised. People carried flags and defied the government order. This is known as Nagpur Flag Satyagraha. The Satyagraha which was started in May, lasted up to August. Thousands of people from all parts of the country thronged in Nagpur, defied the ban and courted imprisonment.

One Rumsi Subadhra Devi, a heroic woman of Allahabad also participated in this satyagraha and courted imprisonment. Jamnalal Bajaj, a multi-millionaire and the treasurer of the Congress was also arrested and put into prison. His car was seized. To recover the fine imposed on him, the car was auctioned. But no one came forward to bid in the auction. The government officials were put to shame and they were forced to take the car to Kathiawar.

In the last phase of the struggle Vittal Bhai Patel and Sardar Vallabhai Patel came to lead the Satyagraha. The Government no more carried their repressive policy and stopped arresting persons when the flag was carried. Thus the right to carry the flag was established, by the glorious satyagraha at Nagpur.

## Fortieth Congress at Delhi in 1923 :

Maulana Abul Khalam Azad presided over this special Congress. He was born in Mecca, educated in Egypt and settled down in Calcutta. He edited two journals by name Al-Hilal and Al-Balaq. He had immense faith in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, and had courted imprisonment on many occasions. He was a great scholar and he had written many famous books in Urdu, Persian and Arabic. He is the first Education Minister of Free India.



He said that no individual nor any Government had any right to enslave the people who are all the servants of God. "To get back in bits our freedom which we had lost, he said "is just like asking us to receive in bits the things which had been stolen from us." This Congress approved the Council entry plan and also appointed a sub-committee to chalk out the programme for the civil disobedience movement.

### Forty First Congress at Kakinada in 1923 :

Under the Chairmanship of Maulana Mohamad Ali, this Congress was held at Kakinada in Andhra State. He led the Khilafat movement in India. He was invited to the First Round Table Conference. At London while he was talking with heat and vehemence he had an attack of blood pressure and collapsed.



“If the rulers adopt beastly attitude and try to suppress my freedom, I will not hesitate to gather all my strength to hit back the Government. No doubt war is bad. But to live under the misrule of an alien power is worse. If we are determined to lay down our lives for the cause of our motherland, in a moment we will be free,” declared the Maulana in his spirited Presidential Address.

### **Forty Second Congress at Belgaum in 1924 :**

This Congress is unique in many respects. No student of history can ever forget this Belgaum session of the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi who made "men out of dust", presided over this session. We need not deal elaborately here about the Mahatma. Who is there in India, nay, in the world that does not know the life and teachings of the "Father of our Nation?" The history of the Congress from 1920 forms part and parcel of Mahatma's life.



His Presidential Speech was a sermon on Satyagraha. He said that the Government failed to pay heed to our protests about the repressive measures. The people of India and the people of Asia had come to know that the aim and object of the European countries was only to exploit the Asian people. It was crystal clear that out of the toils and sufferings of the Indians, the British wanted to lead a luxurious life. He said that he would resist every attempt of the British to stay in India till the last of his life. But he also made it clear that he would not adopt violent means. He felt sure that Satyagraha would never be defeated. He expressed the view that so long as there was

one true satyagrahi left, victory would be theirs. He appealed to the people to become true satyagrahis and work for the country.

### **Forty Third Congress at Kanpur in 1925 :**

Sarojini Devi the celebrated poetess presided over this Congress. She was a delegate to the Second Round Table Conference. She was considered to be one of the finest orators. She toured foreign countries and propagated the ideals of the Congress.



Her Presidential Address was a song and a clarion call to the freedom-fighters.

### **Forty Fourth Congress at Gaubathi in 1926 :**

S. Srinivasa Iyengar the veteran advocate of Madras who resigned his Advocate General's post and renounced the C. I. E. title as a protest against the Government's repressive policy, presided over this Congress. He participated in the boycott of the Simon Commission.



In his Presidential Address, Sri. Srinivasa Iyengar said that the British Government were

repeating the same old ideas with new words and phrases. But there was little change of heart. Their main aim seemed to be to make the Congress abandon the demand for self-government, and accept their reforms. The policy of the Congressmen in the legislatures should be to expose the Government's attempts to hinder the progress of the country towards self-rule. He said that to talk of accepting ministry at this juncture was nothing but madness.

#### **Forty Fifth Congress at Madras in 1927 :**

Madras City was again the venue of the Congress Session in 1927. Dr. M. A. Ansari was elected to preside over this Congress.



He was an outstanding nationalist who had taken part in the "Home Rule" agitation, non-co-operation movement, civil disobedience movement, salt satyagraha and boycott of Simon Commission. He had suffered imprisonment on several

occasions.

In his Presidential Address he said that British Imperialism was built on the foundation of India's subjugation to Britain and the moment

**India** attained her freedom, that imperialism would collapse like a house of cards. If Asian countries were to be freed from the bondage of foreign yoke and if there was to be freedom throughout the world, India should be freed from the shackles of the British domination.

“Complete Independence is the goal of the Indian people,” declared the Congress and that is the note-worthy feature of this Session of the Congress.

### **Neil Statue Satyagraha in Madras - 1927 :**

Before the Congress Session, Madras City became a very busy centre for Congress activities. Some youths with a burning sense of patriotism decided to start a satyagraha to remove the statue of Col. Neil which was in the centre of Mount Road, one of the important roads in the City. We should know something about this movement, which gave a great fillip to the nationalist upsurge in the South.

We read about the first War of Independence, the “Sepoy Mutiny”, in the beginning of this book. After the great revolution, Neil who was a military officer in Madras, was deputed to the North to put down the patriots. He and his soldiers committed great atrocities and inflicted untold miseries on the people. On



their way they got hold of people and hanged them on the trees. They put on fire a number of villages. If anybody tried to escape they butchered him mercilessly.

Col. Neil who committed such grave atrocities, was honoured by the British rulers. A statue was erected in Madras city in his honour. To remove the statue of one who was a hero in the eyes of the British Imperialists, but one who was a demon in the eyes of the Indians, was the object of the Satyagraha started in Madras. The Satyagrahis planned to break the statue with hammer, but later on, Mahatma Gandhi suggested that the statue might be pelted with small clay balls.

In this satyagraha movement youths from Tamil Nad, Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala participated in large numbers and courted imprisonment.

One Anjalai Ammal with her infant in her arms offered satyagraha and courted imprisonment. This is one of the many memorable and touching incidents in the history of freedom struggle.

Simon Commission was about to visit India then. The boycott movement against the Commission was to be successfully conducted.

So, at the request of the leaders the youths stopped the Neil Statue Satyagraha.

When Rajaji assumed power in Madras and became the Chief Minister in 1937 he ordered the removal of this statue. There were some questions about this removal in British Parliament. But Rajaji replied that the statue was safe in a place where it ought to be.

### **Fortysixth Congress at Calcutta in 1928 :**

The Simon Commission arrived in India by the first week of February, 1928. Wherever the Commission went, complete hartal was observed. Even in the Central Assembly, a resolution was adopted boycotting the Simon Commission.

An all-party conference was summoned at Delhi, and it appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru to draft a constitution for India.

Pandit Motilal Nehru was elected the President of the Congress that year. The draft constitution prepared by him was the main resolution adopted at that Congress.

This draft constitution accepted 'Self-Government within the British Empire' as the goal of India's fight for freedom. The resolution on the constitution said that if the

British Government failed to accept 'Nehru's Report', the Congress would launch upon a country-wide movement of non-co-operation and no-tax campaign. Thus the Congress fixed up a time limit for direct action.

This resolution was moved by Mahatma Gandhi. Pandi Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Chandra Bose vehemently opposed the resolution on the ground that it accepted Self-Government under British Empire. The father's report was strongly opposed by his own son!. Is this not an unique event for us to remember? Any how the resolution was put to vote and was carried.

### **Bardoli Satyagraha—1928**

The people of India saw the courage of an advocate of Ahamadabad Court who resisted the onslaught of the British Government without fear. That lawyer was none other than our late-lamented leader Sardar Vallabhai Patel; who was called by his friends the 'Ironman of India'. His elder brother Vitalbhai Patel who was the President of the Central Assembly also participated in this no-tax movement conducted in Bardoli, a small village in Surat District of Bombay State.

In 1927, the whole village was affected by floods. The peasants lost heavily. They were

suffering without even a morsel of food. As though to add fuel to the fire, the Government enhanced the land revenue. Peasants were not in a position to make both ends meet and pay even the usual taxes. But the alien Government did not care for the difficulties of the poor and raised the taxes. Even the peasants of Gujarat who were known for their patience and perseverance, could not tolerate this atrocious action of the heartless and cruel authorities.

They submitted a petition and prayed for the redress of their grievances. The arrogant Government did not pay heed to the people. The Government officials began to collect the taxes forcibly. But where was the money? The Government threatened that if the people did not pay the taxes in time, they would be forced to pay it with fine. What could the poor peasants do? They were like dumb driven cattle. Some of them approached Vallabhai Patel to help them. It was thus, that Vallabhai Patel came into the scene.

Patel told the Government point-blank that the enhancing of taxes was very bad and if the Government refused to consider the request of the people, the peasants would launch upon a no-tax campaign. Vallabhai's warning fell on deaf ears.

Then he organised the peasants and explained to them the significance of the policy of the no tax campaign. The peasants promised that they would follow his advice and stand by him. Under his able leadership the movement was carried on for six months. All the attempts of the Government to collect the taxes failed. The officials threatened the people, but they did not budge an inch. The Government seized the properties. Even then the peasants were determined to resist. Goondas were hired to beat the innocent peasants, but it was of no avail. The peasants were united.

The Bombay Government came to the conclusion that the unshakable determination of the people could not be broken. So, they prepared to yield. But Vallabhai Patel said that no talk was possible unless all the arrested persons were unconditionally released and the lands and other properties that had been seized, were restored to the concerned owners. The Government conceded this and then the satyagraha was stopped.

The victory of the Bardoli peasants was celebrated under the presidentship of Mahatma Gandhi. At this meeting Gandhiji called Vallabhai Patel the 'Sardar'. From that day onwards Vallabhai came to be known throughout the country as 'Sardar Patel'. 'Sardar' in Hindi means Commander.

---

## CHAPTER V

### Forty seventh Congress at Lahore in 1929:

The last phase of our freedom struggle begins with this year. The Congress declared



that its aim was *Purna Swaraj*—Complete Independence. This declaration of complete independence as the goal of the Congress was made on the midnight of thirty-first December, 1929, on the banks of the river Ravi

in the Punjab under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru who now holds the destiny of our great nation in his hands.

Who is there to-day in this world who does not know our Prime Minister? His books, 'Glimpses of World History', 'Discovery of India' and his 'Autobiography' form part of modern English literature. They have been translated into many languages, both Indian and foreign. He is one of the greatest statesmen in the mid-twentieth Century.

Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of truth and non-violence, declared that Jawaharlal Nehru

was his heir. The Mahatma wanted peace to be established throughout the world. And to-day, Jawāharlal Nehru, as a true interpreter of Gandhiji's ideal is playing the role of 'peace-maker' between the conflicting big powers in international politics. But for his persistent efforts, the great powers would have come to a direct clash, which would have resulted in a devastating Third World War.

In his presidential address, Nehru made it clear that the days of Imperialism were coming to an end. He also pointed out that Asia and America alone could show a new path to humanity. He observed that resurgent India could not tolerate the foreign domination. They had decided to launch upon direct action to end the Imperialistic domination. Violence was bad; but slavery was worse. He said that we should show to the world that an unarmed nation could free itself from the shackles of the alien rule and that the suppressed people of Asia looked to India for guidance and leadership.

Sri Nehru warned that it would be sheer cowardice if people who were determined to change the course of history, were frightened by the consequences. Days of secret movement had gone. The Congress had boldly and openly

made its declaration. Without distinction of caste, creed and sex, the people of India should launch upon direct action. They should know that the reward they would get was imprisonment and death, but they should not be frightened. India would become free and the freedom of India would pave the way for the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the world. He ended his speech with the words 'Long Live Revolution'

### **Salt Satyagraha—1930 :**

The Congress wanted to give effect to the resolution passed at Lahore. It called upon the people to observe twenty-sixth January as the 'Independence Day'. A pledge was drafted, which was read at meetings held on Twenty-sixth January from that year onwards.

The desire to fight against the British Government and obtain freedom touched the heart of every one. Gandhiji, who always had an intimate knowledge of men and matters, chalked out a programme of struggle.

Men with strong determination and patriotic fervour joined the ranks of the Congress. Gandhiji marched from Sabarmati to Dandi, a sea side village in Bombay State, to disobey the salt-tax. A small band of volunteers joined him



The news of the Mahatma's march to Dandi spread like wild fire.

"Salt is the essence of food. Even the poorest among the poor purchase salt for their food. Nature bestows it in plenty. By evaporating the sea-water in the Sun's heat salt can be obtained. The British Government has imposed tax even on this essential element of food", said Gandhiji and as a protest against this obnoxious salt-tax started his famous Salt Satyagraha. The world looked on with astonishment.

Throughout the country, Congress leaders started a similar movement. In Tamilnad, our revered Rajaji marched with volunteers to Vedaranyam, a sea-side village in Tanjore district and courted imprisonment.

The Government was amazed. They could not understand this new technique and cope up with the situation. Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders were arrested. Volunteers who disobeyed the salt-law were lathi-charged by the police. Countess satyagrahis received severe wounds. But they patiently carried on the struggle. In some places the police resorted to firing also. Many even lost their lives. In spite of the terrible atrocities perpetrated by the police, more than a lakh of people disobeyed

the law and courted imprisonment. The Government found it impossible to suppress the movement which was growing day by day. Lord Irwin who was then the Viceroy, released the Mahatma and came to an agreement with him, by which the Government allowed the poor the right to prepare salt from sea-water without any tax. This is known as the 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact.'

### **Fortyeighth Congress at Karachi in 1931: ..**

After the successful conclusion of the Salt Satyagraha' under the presidentship of Sardar Patel, the Congress met at Karachi, the present capital of Pakistan. Sardar Patel was the right hand man of Mahatma Gandhi. Later in free India he held the office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and he successfully integrated the Native States by making the princes surrender their rights and privileges. If Gandhiji was responsible for the peaceful surrender of power by Britain to India, Sardar Patel was primarily responsible for the integration of the country and strengthening of the newly won freedom.



It was in this session that the tri-colour national flag was designed and a charter of people's rights was also adopted.

**1932 to 1934**—Gandhiji returned to India after attending the Round Table Conference. He was not satisfied with the proceedings of this conference. The British Government arrested him as soon as he landed in India and unleashed an era of repression.

Ramsay Macdonald, the Prime Minister of England wanted to separate the scheduled classes from the Caste-Hindus and published a treacherous scheme known as the 'Communal Award'.

Gandhiji protested against this unjust award and undertook a fast unto death in the Yerawada prison. The leaders of the Schedule class including Ambedkar entered into an agreement with the Mahatma and the Congress and publicly announced that they did not want the Communal Award. This settlement was known as the 'Yerawada pact'.

During these years, Gandhiji undertook fasting on many occasions. The Government felt tired of oppressing these satyagrahas and therefore release Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders.

In the meanwhile, Dr. Ansari and S. Sathya-murthy restarted the Swarajya Party with a view to contest the elections for 'the Central and Provincial Assemblies. But, as the Congress itself accepted the Council-Entry Programme, So, the Swaraj Party merged with the congress.

It was under these circumstances that youths with radical views inside the Congress, like Jayaprakash Narayan, Yusuf Meharaly, Achut Patvardhan, Asoka Mehta and others met at Patna and started a party inside the Congress, known as the 'Congress Socialist Party' under the presidentship of Acharya Narendra Dev, who had been the Vice-Chancellor of Banares and Lucknow Universities. This party of radicals which was blessed and supported by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Chandra Bose, wanted to organise the peasants and the workers and make them participate in the freedom fight. They also wanted to make free India a 'Socialist State'.

### **Fortyninth Congress at Bombay in 1934:**

Rajendra Prasad, the first President of the Indian Republic, a true follower of Mahatma



Gandhi and the hero of Champaran Satyagraha, presided over this Congress Session which met at Bombay.

In that year Bihar experienced one of the worst havocs of nature, an earthquake, which resulted in the loss of crores of rupees and thousands of lives. Rajan Babu did yeoman service and helped the people in their distress. It was said that the relief measures which he organised were more than what the Government did.

He appealed to the people to follow the satyagraha methods in their struggle for freedom.

It was in this Congress that it was decided that only habitual wearers of Khadi could stand for the Congress elections. Gandhiji did not enroll himself as a member of the Congress this year, but he guided its deliberations and gave the lead whenever it was wanted. He

devoted his time more on constructive activities.

From this year onwards till 1947, Acharya Kripalani served as the General Secretary of the Congress and gave the organization a form and shape.

### **The Village Industries Association :**

The All India Village Industries Association was established in this year. In a country like India with a vast population, but with poor capital, Mahatma Gandhi thought that small-scale village industries would give employment to many and at the same time help production of wealth. He also felt that big machines would do the work of many and make unemployment acute.

So, to suit the conditions prevailing in India he preferred organising small-scale industries. On the basis of a resolution adopted at the Congress in 1934, this organization was started. This formed the basis for the constructive activities of Gandhiji.

The head-quarters for this organization was established at a village known as Maganwadi, near Wardha in Madhya Pradesh. This organization conducts research-work in moder-

nising old handicraft industries and publishes periodical literature to guide the constructive workers.

J. C. Kumarappa became its secretary and organised the Association. This organization advises people to use hand-pound rice instead of mill-hulled rice and they also organises people to take to bee-keeping, jaggery and paper making, soap making, coir making and such other small industries. These organisers have established a Central Museum at Maganwadi. Further, they are giving training to people to organise small village industries.

#### **Fiftieth and Fiftyfirst Congress at Lucknow and Faizpur in 1936-37.**

In 1936 the Congress Session was held at Lucknow and in 1937 at Faizpur.

On both these sessions Jawaharlal Nehru presided. The fiftieth Congress condemned the Government of India Act of 1935, passed by the British Parliament, but decided to contest the elections held under the basis of this Act.

The Congress won the elections with overwhelming majority in many provinces.

After the elections the All India Congress Committee and the elected members decided to form ministries. In eight provinces Congress men formed ministries.

**Fiftysecond Congress at Haripura in 1938:**

This Congress Session was held in a village called Haripura in Gujarat. Subash Chandra Bose was elected President of this Congress.

Subash Chandra Bose was one of those who passed the Indian Civil Service Examination and held a high position in the Government. He resigned his office and joined the non-co-operation movement at the call of



Mahatma Gandhi. He was a radical in his views and a revolutionary by nature. The British authorities were terribly afraid of him. The Government put him to a lot of trouble.

We all know that during the Second World War he escaped from India, went to Germany and then to Japan. He organized the overseas Indians into a mighty army and marched into India. These daring deeds of Subash Babu endeared him to the people as Netaji form part of the glorious chapter in the last phase of the history of our freedom movement.

In his presidential speech, Subash Chandra Bose said that many Empires in the past which



had adopted the policy of 'Divide and Rule' had collapsed sooner or later. But British Imperialism appeared to be very strong. The Congress and Gandhiji were necessary to free the country from the grips of the terrible Imperialists. The teaching of Gandhiji was the guiding star not only for India, but for the whole world. The freedom of India was absolutely necessary for the freedom of humanity. 'Long Live Mahatma Gandhi'.

Thus he exhorted the people to throw themselves into the liberation movement and added — "Who will live if India dies and who will die if India lives? Let us die so that India may live."

### **Fiftythird Congress at Tripuri in 1939:**

Again Subash Chandra Bose was elected the President of the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi wanted Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya to be elected as the president. But in the contest for the election Subhas Babu won.

This Congress was held at Tripuri village in Madhya Pradesh. Subash Bose was ill at that time.

In his presidential address he hinted at the coming of the Second World War and said that the Congress should give an ultimatum to the British Government for conceding the national

demand. If they failed the Congress should launch on a struggle to end Imperialism and obtain independence.

In this Congress Govinda Vallabha Pant brought a resolution that Bose should form his working committee with the consent and advice of Mahatma Gandhi. The delegates were divided on this point, but the resolution was carried.

#### **Fiftyfourth Congress at Ramgarh in 1940 :**

Subash Bose did not continue as the President of the Congress for long. The differences between him and other leaders became so sharp that he resigned the presidentship and formed the 'Forward Block'. After his resignation and till this session began, Sri Rajendra Prasad acted as the president.

During this period the Second World War was declared.

This year's session was held in a village known as Ramgarh in Bihar. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad presided over this Congress.

He said that under the leadership of Gandhiji and with unity and discipline in their ranks, the Congress was bound to win in its efforts.

The Congress adopted a resolution condemning the Government for declaring India as a party to the war without consulting the people of the country.

## CHAPTER VI

No Congress session was held after the Congress at Ramgarh, till India became free. Only the All-India Congress Committee met off and on to discuss and decide about the various problems that had sprung up.

It was during this period that the Muslim League under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah demanded Pakistan, a separate Sovereign State for Muslims.

The All-India Congress Committee which met at Poona offered to co-operate with the Government in their war-efforts on condition that the Government should agree to the formation of a National Government at the Centre. Mahatma Gandhi who was opposed to all wars, relinquished his leadership. His followers like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Rajendra Prasad also got out of the Working Committee. But the British Government did not pay heed to the demands of the Congress. They expanded the Viceroy's Executive Council and carried on the war-propaganda more vigorously.

The Congress had no other go. The leaders again approached Mahatma Gandhi to take up the leadership and guide them.

Mahatma Gandhi planned the 'Individual Satyagraha'. Acharya Vinobha Bave was selected as the first satyagrahi to resist the British War-efforts by calling upon the people not to lend any help to the Government. Congressmen who resigned from the ministries, members of both the Central and Provincial Legislatures and high ranking Congress leaders and ordinary workers, all joined the movement and carried on vigorous anti-war propaganda. Jails were filled up and for two years the movement was in full swing.

At the beginning of 1942, Rajaji who was released from prison convened a meeting of the Madras Congress-Legislature party and adopted a resolution requesting the Congress to accept the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan and form a National Government at the Centre. There was a lot of opposition to this move throughout the country.

The All India Congress Committee was summoned and Rajaji moved his resolution. The resolution was defeated by an overwhelming majority, and another resolution affirming

faith in the unity of the country was also passed. Rajaji who did not agree with the views of the majority, left the Congress and canvassed publicly for his point of view.

The entry of Japan into the war and its victory over the British in Malaya and Burma and the march of Hitler's army into Soviet Russia, gave a new turn to the war. Britain's Allies, America and China, expressed sympathies with the nationalist aspirations in India. So, the British Government was forced to send Sir Stafford Cripps to India to meet the leaders of the various Indian political parties and come to an understanding with them. But this Mission failed, and the only course open to India was again direct action.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote in his weekly 'Harijan' that the British should 'Quit India'. His writings at this period stirred the entire nation. But his warnings were not heeded by the British Government.

**'Quit India' Movement.**—The All India Congress Committee met at Bombay on August 7-th and 8-th 1942, and adopted the famous "Quit India" resolution and authorised the Mahatma to start the movement.

Gandhiji gave the clarion call to the nation to 'Do or Die'. The Government was terrified and arrested all the leaders of the Congress including Gandhiji. The people who had lost their leaders did not keep quiet. The Students from the schools and colleges came out in large numbers and took a leading part in this last fight for freedom.

The uprising was so great that the British administration came to a stand-still in many places for many days. The British rule used horrible and cruel methods to suppress the nationalist upsurge.

Thousands of people were arrested and put in prison. Many were shot dead. The houses of innocent people were burnt and women were molested. The violence used by the British was of such a magnitude that innocent people at many places were forced to retaliate violently. Mahatma Gandhiji's private secretary Maha deva Desai died in prison. Kasthuri Bai Gandhi also breathed her last in jail.

The rebellion had been ruthlessly suppressed. The people were terror-struck. It was at this juncture that Jayaprakash Narayan who was in prison in Bihar escaped with some of his friends, and joined his other colleagues who

were carrying on the struggle from outside prison. Again the movement was reorganised. This movement is popularly known as the "August Revolution"

### **Our Freedom Fight in Foreign Lands :**

At the beginning of the Second World War, Rash Bihari Bose who was banished from India for his terrorist activities, was living in Japan. After the victory of Japan in Malaya, he came to Singapore and organised the Indians living in Malayan Peninsula into a National army under the auspices of the "Indian League." But his efforts did not succeed fully. Subash Chandra Bose who escaped from India to Germany, came to Malaya in July 1943. He accepted the leadership of the India League and gave a reorientation to the Indian National Army.

At the first parade of the newly formed army, Subash Bose hoisted the tri-colour flag with the inscription of the *charka* on it and saluted Mahatma Gandhi and called him the "Father of the Nation". He made a fervent appeal to the soldiers to dedicate their lives to the cause of the Indian freedom.

This army was named the "Indian National Army" and the soldiers saluted one another

with the slogan "Jai Hind". This slogan with which our Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru ends his speeches now-a-days, was coined by Subash Chandra Bose. The soldiers of the Indian National Army called their beloved leader "Nethaji". From that time onwards, Subash Chandra Bose was known as "Netaji"

A provisional Government of free India was formed on twentyfirst October at Singapore. The Indian merchants in Malaya gave a lot of financial help to the Government of Netaji. At the beginning of January 1944, he shifted the capital of the provisional Free India Government from Singapore to Rangoon in Burma. On fourth February of this year, Netaji's army crossed the Arakan Hills and hoisted Free India's flag in the Indian territory after fighting a ditched battle with the British soldiers.

The Japanese who captured the Andaman and Nicobar Islands handed them over to Netaji. The great war was turning favourably to the Allied forces. So, the Indian National Army could not get supplies of either ammunition or food and the free India's liberation force had to surrender to the might of the well-equipped British Army. Netaji Bose flew to Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, and afterwards, we do not have any proper or authentic news about



him. It is said that he met his death in an air-crash, but nothing definite is known to this day.

The British arrested and brought the captains of the Indian National Army to trial in the Red Fort in New Delhi. Bhulabhai Desai, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Asaf Ali and Jawaharlal Nehru appeared in the Court and argued on their behalf. The leaders of the army though sentenced at first, were released afterwards.

The country welcomed the release of the leaders of the Indian National Army with great jubilation. Netaji's fiftieth birthday was also celebrated throughout the country in a grand manner. This created confidence among the Indian soldiers in the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. During the Jubilation one British captain insulted the Indian soldiers for lack of discipline, and as a protest six hundred soldiers refused to take food. The officer immediately made open apologies for his action and it was only then the Indian soldiers gave up the fast.

The Navy utilised this favourable atmosphere to get their grievances redressed, and resorted to strike. The military was called in to restore order. The Navy did not hesitate to

use their machine-guns when the military opened fire at them.

### **Swaraj Obtained**

The situation was getting out of hand. The Labour Government which had just then assumed office, came to the conclusion that the days of their rule in India were numbered.

In the elections held in 1946 for the Provincial Assemblies, the Congress captured the majority of seats in eight provinces and formed ministries. The Muslim League also contested the elections with Pakistan as their main demand. In the North West Frontier Province, where the Muslims were in great majority, the Congress won the elections and formed the ministry. In Bengal, Sind, and Assam with the help of nominated English members the League formed ministries. In the Punjab a coalition ministry came into existence.

The results of the elections opened the eyes of the Labour Government. They realised that they could no more continue their hold on India. They deputed a Parliamentary Delegation and it was followed by a Cabinet Mission, and as a result of their deliberations with Indian leaders,

a provisional National Government in coalition with the Muslim League was formed with Jawaharlal Nehru as the Prime Minister.

The attempts to wean away the Muslim League from its demand for the separation of the country proved futile and the Congress had to yield to the partition. India was divided into the Indian Union and Pakistan. Nature wanted India to be one, but cut her into two.

India became free on fifteenth of August 1947. Free India framed her own constitution and declared herself a Sovereign Democratic Republic on Twenty. sixth January, 1950.

Long Live Free India! Long Live the Indian Republic!

JAI HIND

---

